THE CULTURAL HERITAGE WHEN PROGRAMMING CRUISE ITINERARIES

Antonio Pelaez-Verdet, PhD.

Pilar Loscertales-Sanchez, PhD. Student

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ABSTRACT:

The cruise ports are key for distributing tourism flows inside the regions in which they moore. Frequently, the destinations willing to benefit from the visits of cruise passengers find it hard when it comes to get included in the visits' itineraries. In this research, we provide insights about how to identify the optimal port for joining efforts, in order to set up an efficient strategy. Using the concept of hinterland -a port's surrounding area which is significantly influenced by it-, we first identified the municipalities offering cultural heritage sites worth to be visited in Andalusia, and using their georeferences we figured out for each one the real distance by road to any port in the area studied. The minimum of this distance served as an indicator of which port's hinterland any given municipality belonged to. Afterwards, we run a network model using the GPS coordinates for each municipality, weighting them by the number of cultural heritage sites registered in each one. After calculating the network measures -especially the weighted outdegree- turned out that: a) there were a number of municipalities that belong to the hinterland of a different port than their official correspondent one; and more important b) there were ports that performed as centres in the network, compared to other that were eccentric, also receiving cruises though. Consequently, weighted outdegree is a remarkable indicator for calculating the relative importance of a cruise harbour in a set of neighbouring ports that seldom stop to compete with each other. For a destination management organisation (DMO), properly identifying the best option among the feasible ports to receive visitors can be a key step in the eventual process of benefitting from the cruises industry in the region.

Keywords:

Cruise Port, Weighted Outdegree, Georeference, Network Analysis, Hinterland, Cruise Itinerary